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Summary record of the 33rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 29 June 2016, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Lauber (Vice-President) ..... (Switzerland)

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16-11170 (E)

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In the absence of Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Mr. Lauber (Switzerland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/71/82-E/2016/60)

High-level panel discussion: "Impediments to the protection of civilians"

1. **Mr. O' Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), moderator, having expressed his condolences to the Government and people of Turkey for the recent attack on Istanbul airport, said that civilian deaths and suffering were continuing unabated due to a blatant and shocking lack of respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. There was something fundamentally wrong in the world when attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, which contributed significantly to death, displacement and suffering of people, had become so commonplace that they ceased to incite any reaction.

2. To address that grim reality, stakeholders had announced well over 400 commitments at the recently held World Humanitarian Summit. Continued efforts to disseminate, provide training in and promote the law, including among non-State armed actors, had drawn particularly broad support. Stakeholders had also expressed commitments to strengthen the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel and objects, to improve access to humanitarian and medical assistance, and to enhance precautions to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects during hostilities. The tracking and reporting of violations, and steps to improve accountability and justice for victims, had also been supported. In particular, there was a need to improve significantly the collection, analysis and presentation of data on violations of international humanitarian law in order to demonstrate the human cost of violating the fundamental norms safeguarding humanity.

3. The actions announced at the Summit constituted the first essential steps towards implementing the Agenda for Humanity, set out in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit (A/70/709). All States must use their political and economic leverage to ensure that parties to armed conflict complied with international humanitarian and human rights law, and all stakeholders had a moral obligation to speak out against violations and use their sphere of influence to shape policy decisions.

4. Each specific measure announced at the Summit would, when implemented, make an important contribution to protecting civilians and reducing human suffering worldwide. The international community had a duty to build on the real political will and momentum generated. It must translate into action the commitments undertaken to strengthen the protection of civilians and measure the progress made.

5. He asked what concrete measures States, the Security Council, non-State armed groups and humanitarian organizations should take to address the problem of compliance with the fundamental norms of international humanitarian law.

6. **Mr. Daccord** (Director-General, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)), panellist, said that it was essential to discuss issues related to the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law in forums such as the Council. Although the solution was relatively simple, it was also challenging. On the one hand, international humanitarian law was an essential tool that provided a solid legal framework for reducing the human cost of conflict and for managing a number of issues linked to migration and displacement. On the other hand, implementation of public international law and international humanitarian law could sometimes be problematic given difficulties in ensuring the necessary degree of convergence between States.

7. While organizations such as his were there to provide assistance to facilitate implementation, primary responsibility for respecting and ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law lay with States. It was important to identify steps to be taken to facilitate the practical implementation of international humanitarian law in each country and build on intergovernmental initiatives that could provide assistance in that regard. He noted that two of the resolutions of the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 2015 dealt specifically with the question of strengthening international humanitarian law.

8. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief

Coordinator) asked what roles should be played by the Security Council, States, other parties to conflict and humanitarian organizations in implementing Security Council resolution 2286 (2016) regarding the protection of health care in armed conflict.

9. **Mr. Cone** (Executive Director, Médecins sans frontières — United States), panellist, said that States were making a political choice in allowing the frameworks, rules and norms in place for the protection of civilians to be contravened. His organization had experienced over one hundred attacks against its facilities during a number of conflicts, and unfortunately four of the five permanent members of the Security Council had been part of coalitions linked to some of those incidents. States must be willing to uphold norms of international law, accept investigation and be held to account for their actions.

10. As a bare minimum, organizations such as his must be able to hold a dialogue with parties to a conflict in order to gain safe access to populations. It was not acceptable to criminalize the act of providing medical care to the wounded and sick, including to the enemy. All attacks must be investigated in a credible, impartial and independent manner at the national or international level, with a view to preventing further attacks in the future. It was not sufficient for States to investigate themselves, and the Security Council could play an important role in generating a feedback and accountability loop.

11. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that he would like to know the key reasons behind armed groups' violations of international humanitarian law; how their degree of willingness to respect international humanitarian law had evolved; and how the international community could facilitate efforts to enhance their compliance.

12. **Ms. Decrey-Warner** (Executive President, Geneva Call), panellist, said that there were a number of reasons for violations of international humanitarian law by the hundreds of armed groups that existed. Many non-State armed actors were unaware of, or did not understand, the rules of humanitarian law, and a sense of ownership was more likely to result in compliance. Such groups often had weak chains of command, with combatants operating in remote places at considerable distance from their leaders. The capacity to respect certain humanitarian norms and obligations was often lacking. The longer a conflict lasted, the more likely it was that violations of international humanitarian law would increase.

13. As to the willingness of groups to respect international humanitarian law, she said that a study of 19 different armed groups for the World Humanitarian Summit had shown that, while the groups had demonstrated an interest in learning more about the norms of international humanitarian law, not all were ready to respect them. It was important to remember that changes in behaviour would take time.

14. The international community could facilitate efforts to enhance respect of international humanitarian law among armed groups by working on issues of access. In addition, humanitarian actors were often criminalized for their contact with so-called terrorist groups. The complementarity that existed in the activities of States, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies should be recognized, as should the need for political support for educating non-State armed actors in humanitarian law.

15. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked what major challenges health-care workers faced in providing impartial medical care to the wounded and sick.

16. **Mr. Abdulkarim** (Director, Iraqi Health and Social Care Organization), panellist, said that there were a number of challenges concerning the provision of medical care in Iraq. At the macro level, the State lacked the preparedness necessary to respond rapidly to an emergency situation. Impediments at the micro level included access to medical facilities and resources in cities under siege or attack, as well as the destruction of infrastructure. Non-governmental organizations also faced logistical problems in providing health-related services. Persons with disabilities were particularly vulnerable. Internally displaced persons placed a further burden on the public health system in certain areas. Abuse of health system resources by State and non-State actors also made access to health-care institutions difficult.

17. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked about the impact of the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations against children in armed conflict, and whether it had

motivated political action to seek to end violations and enhance accountability.

18. **Ms. Zerrougui** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict), panellist, said that the monitoring and reporting mechanism had been established by the Security Council in 2005 at the request of Member States as a tool for the provision of credible information that was verified by the United Nations. Where the necessary political will existed, the mechanism, which was triggered by the listing of parties and had legitimacy, allowed conflicting parties to engage constructively with the highest United Nations representative of the country concerned and with all other relevant stakeholders. Progress in ending violations was being made through the mechanism: 9 out of 25 action plans had been finalized and some 150,000 children had been released over the previous 20 years. It was important that the tools Member States themselves had put in place continued to be protected and strengthened.

19. **Mr. Jabbar** (Iraq) said that coordination was needed between the Government of Iraq and the many United Nations agencies working in the country to ensure the best outcome for the people on the ground. Any violations must be identified very quickly so that they could be acted upon. He asked what practical measures Governments could take to provide for better coordination with United Nations agencies.

20. **Ms. Baglole** (United Kingdom) said that non-compliance with international humanitarian law was the greatest impediment to the protection of civilians. More emphasis should be placed on raising awareness of the need for compliance with international humanitarian law among non-State armed groups before outbreaks of hostility, and there should be no impunity for States or non-State armed actors violating their obligations. The United Kingdom fully supported the work of the International Criminal Court, its ad hoc tribunals and national courts to hold those found in non-compliance to account. Noting that, in the context of armed conflict, international humanitarian law guaranteed access for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the protection of all civilians, she asked what further practical steps could be taken to obtain access to people in need during conflict situations.

21. **Mr. Bessler** (Switzerland) said that civilians were often targeted and used as weapons of war, despite States having undertaken to comply with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. To improve the protection of civilians, military standard operating procedures should be reviewed to ascertain how much of a distinction was actually made between civilian and military objects, and between combatants and non-combatants. Switzerland was in favour of a full, prompt, impartial and effective investigation in the event of violations, and was disappointed that the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission, established pursuant to article 90 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, had not yet been utilized. Data, including on positive measures, should be collected and analysed. Domestic legislation adopted must be consistent with international humanitarian law; it should ensure that humanitarian action was not hampered by counter-terrorism measures and that medical activities compatible with medical ethics could be conducted. Efforts must also be made to disseminate international humanitarian law among all those carrying weapons.

22. **Mr. Daccord** (Director-General, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that dialogue and close collaboration with national authorities were essential in protecting civilians and resolving humanitarian crises. Respect for international humanitarian law by the State and parties to a conflict radically changed the situation for affected populations and lowered the humanitarian cost of conflict. ICRC was ready to help States ensure respect for international humanitarian law and was also working to find ways of further improving respect for international humanitarian law at the intergovernmental level.

23. While States had a responsibility to permit access for humanitarian organizations, humanitarian organizations also had responsibilities. Humanitarian action could not be imposed on States or populations, and an ongoing dialogue must be undertaken with the State and parties to a conflict to build the transparency and trust necessary. Direct access to affected populations, rather than access through local partners, should be prioritized, even in the most difficult areas, because it facilitated an understanding of the needs and challenges of the populations and ensured a response that could be tailored accordingly. Humanitarian organizations must also identify the risks they were willing to take. While organizations should be careful,

they should be ready to take the risks necessary to reach the populations in need.

24. **Mr. Abdulkarim** (Director, Iraqi Health and Social Care Organization) recalled that Iraq had been in constant conflict since 2003. On the operational side, United Nations agencies and international and local non-governmental organizations could work with the Iraqi Government on establishing a rapid response plan, taking into consideration community-based approaches to health-care provision. The development of a nationwide preparedness plan to enable the country to respond to emergencies, crises or conflict situations could facilitate the development of alternative solutions. On the policy side, the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations could work with the Iraqi Government to enhance respect for international humanitarian law. Training similar to that already provided by Geneva Call might also be provided to stakeholders, including non-State armed forces or militia working with the Government.

25. **Mr. Cone** (Executive Director, Médecins sans frontières — United States) said that discussion about impediments to the protection of civilians must also address the right of civilians to flee violence. The political choices of States were hampering the ability of civilians to flee conflict safely and increasing the vulnerability of those lucky enough to escape. If States were to protect civilians, they had to review their policies. Critical consideration should also be given by the United Nations and contributing countries as to whether emergency measures, such as the protection of civilian sites in South Sudan, were actually achieving their objective and meeting basic standards of humanity, including in terms of the provision of assistance.

26. **Ms. Zerrougui** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict) said that the formation, under the monitoring and reporting mechanism, of an interministerial coordination body composed of representatives of relevant ministries, government agencies and partners on the ground would promote a comprehensive dialogue to encourage implementation and the building of trust, including in Iraq. Access was sometimes refused as a means of punishing the population or of preventing the international community from witnessing the situation on the ground. Member States needed to understand that it was in their interests to provide access for monitoring and for the provision of support and humanitarian assistance. Such access would help Governments, which were held accountable by their people, to move forward and resolve issues.

27. **Ms. Decrey-Warner** (Executive President, Geneva Call) said that the fundamental right of a civilian to receive assistance, irrespective of whether he or she was in an area controlled by armed actors or the Government, must remain the focus. There were two types of access being discussed. The first was the access authorized by States to allow United Nations agencies or non-governmental organizations to engage with armed groups; too many States were still denying that access. The second was the access granted to humanitarian organizations by conflicting parties for the provision of medical assistance in hospitals. Research had shown that non-State armed actors were more likely to grant access to humanitarian organizations if they had received education and training, and if trust had been built before a crisis became extreme. Humanitarian organizations themselves also had a responsibility to demonstrate impartiality and neutrality.

28. **Mr. Seleka** (South Africa) said it was a matter of concern that impunity was making non-compliance the norm. The compliance of all parties with international humanitarian law must be strengthened and existing gaps closed so that attacks on health facilities could not be portrayed as collateral damage. Violations must be investigated in an independent and impartial manner. He wondered why the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission had not been utilized for such investigations. He would also like to know why Médecins sans frontières had decided to withdraw from the World Humanitarian Summit.

29. **Mr. Digiovanna** (United States of America) asked what lessons could be learned from the monitoring and reporting mechanism with a view to obtaining better data to address the access challenge.

30. **Ms. Cleason** (International Federation of Medical Students' Associations), speaking on behalf of the children and youth major group, asked how security risks to different sectors of the population could be better identified, and how data collection and disaggregation could be more effectively used in that regard. She also asked how the international community could create strong incentives for non-State

actors to fulfil their responsibilities under international humanitarian law.

31. **Ms. Zerrougui** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict), recalling that the mechanism in place was a tool not simply for monitoring and reporting violations, but also for engaging with parties, said that direct contact with the parties concerned was not to be feared and did not confer greater legitimacy on them, but was generally in the interests of all. It would create the space for further discussion and identification by the parties themselves of actions to help move the situation forward. The situation in Colombia, where the parties to the conflict were engaging in a peace process to develop an action plan, was a good example of the progress that could be made.

32. **Mr. Csada** (Observer for the European Union) said that the European Union would continue to protect civilians, including those fleeing from conflict, and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. It would welcome the holding of regular voluntary meetings among nations to discuss thematic issues and reports on the implementation of international humanitarian law. The European Union was concerned about the increasing attacks on humanitarian personnel and agreed that the act of treating the wounded should not be criminalized. States should fight impunity and systematically monitor and report on violations, which should be independently investigated. Non-State armed actors did not know enough about international humanitarian law, and the European Union would continue its efforts to raise awareness, provide training and build trust. He asked what role regional organizations could play in promoting respect for international humanitarian law, given that ensuring compliance was usually a State responsibility.

33. **Mr. Lindroos** (Finland), expressing appreciation for the work undertaken by the organizations represented on the panel, said that his Government attached high priority to promoting compliance with international humanitarian law. He asked how the particular challenges faced by the most vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, could best be addressed during conflict and emergencies.

34. **Mr. Cone** (Executive Director, Médecins sans frontières — United States) said that while his organization had welcomed the strong support for the provision of health care expressed in the report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit (A/70/709), it had decided to withdraw from that event since it did not expect it to deliver the required humanitarian response. Médecins sans frontières also disagreed fundamentally with the notion of the humanitarian-development nexus, and considered that the two areas should be separated. While development was critical and had its place, all too often basic needs in terms of health care, water, sanitation and food were not being met, not only in conflict areas but also in the camps outside those areas. His organization was also uncomfortable with the rhetoric around the concept of resilience of States and systems, and their ability to respond to disasters. Refugees and internally displaced persons, who were incredibly resilient, were often left to their own devices pending the provision of assistance, which sometimes took months rather than days. The reform agenda was not ambitious enough to address the core humanitarian response needs.

35. As to the role of regional organizations, he said that Security Council resolution 2286 (2016) had been sponsored by Member States from all major regions of the world, and discussion should continue in regional bodies. Given the significant difficulties faced by vulnerable people in conflict situations, endorsement of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action was one of the most important outcomes of the Summit.

36. **Mr. Daccord** (Director-General, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that regional organizations played an essential role in ensuring respect for international humanitarian law. The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa was a good example of how a regional organization had fostered ownership and developed a solution appropriate to the communities involved. Peacekeeping was another important area of activity involving regional organizations. Much remained to be done to address the particular challenges faced by persons with disabilities. While activities on the ground often focused on physical rehabilitation, efforts must be made at the national level to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to identify ways of financing humanitarian assistance for such persons in the medium and long term.

37. **Ms. Decrey-Warner** (Executive President, Geneva Call), emphasizing the need for long-term

investment in training, said that Geneva Call and other non-governmental organizations had worked with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia for a number of years. It was no coincidence that the three subjects around which they had focused their activities had been incorporated as essential elements of the peace agreement.

38. **Ms. Zerrougui** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict) said that the incidence of disability was much higher in conflicts because, without access to health care, a small injury could degenerate into a disability. Regional organizations had legitimacy and played an important role in protecting the work of those seeking to ensure respect for international humanitarian law, in advancing peace processes and in providing a response.

39. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked what could be done to ensure that those who violated international humanitarian law did not enjoy impunity.

40. **Mr. Daccord** (Director-General, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that implementation of the existing legal framework must begin with the State through its national legislation. Education, although important, was not enough to systematically influence behaviour in a situation of extreme violence; sanctions were also required and must be included in national legislation. Although tools were being implemented at the international level, much also remained to be done in the area of international justice. The international community needed to be mobilized in order to respond to specific challenges, and Security Council resolution 2286 (2016) was an example of the progress that could be made. Mechanisms also needed to be developed to ensure continued respect for international law. ICRC and the Swiss Government were undertaking intergovernmental consultations aimed at establishing a forum whereby States could examine compliance with international humanitarian law at the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2019.

41. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that it was important to gather and monitor data and trends concerning international humanitarian law more systematically, and to disseminate the information to parties to a conflict and Member States so that key issues could be addressed. Processes also needed to be in place to ensure that perpetrators did not enjoy impunity.

42. **Ms. Decrey-Warner** (Executive President, Geneva Call) said that a balance must be struck between incentives and sanctions. As non-State armed actors were frequently in denial, they must be made aware of the existence of violations and of their responsibilities to prevent them from recurring. Furthermore, they must be informed that they would not enjoy impunity, that peace would never be built on atrocities, and that their current behaviour would influence the future. States also had a responsibility to set an example and demonstrate their commitment to international humanitarian law and to existing mechanisms, such as the monitoring and reporting mechanism and the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission.

43. **Mr. Cone** (Executive Director, Médecins sans frontières — United States) agreed that those who broke the law should be punished. Checks and balances must be put in place at the State, regional and international levels, including through multilateral systems, investigative bodies and international tribunals, to ensure that corrective measures were taken. In such a dynamic and dangerous environment as conflict, there were a number of grey areas in the rules concerning engagement with structures that might house civilians. Those rules must be simplified to ensure that an active hospital could never be a legitimate target. There were no baseline data capable of capturing the real impact of such incidents in terms of loss of services.

44. **Ms. Zerrougui** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict) said that it was essential to change behaviour by combating impunity. In order to gain legitimacy and support, Governments must lead by example and send strong messages to their troops on the ground that those violating international humanitarian law would not enjoy impunity. Systems also needed to be put in place to guarantee an appropriate response to violations in different contexts, such as in remote areas.

45. **Mr. O'Donnell** (World Federation for Mental Health) said that a better understanding of the

psychology that perpetuated intractable conflicts, and of the psychological tactics for avoiding accountability, could help to inform the discussion. He drew attention to a number of sources of relevant material in that regard.

46. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked what was deterring people from returning to areas of Iraq that had been liberated from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

47. **Mr. Abdulkarim** (Director, Iraqi Health and Social Care Organization) said that destruction of infrastructure, concerns about security constraints and screening, fear of retaliatory attacks, and reluctance to leave safer and more stable locations were some of the factors preventing people from returning to liberated areas.

48. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked how the monitoring and reporting mechanism, which was a tool of the United Nations and thus of Member States, could ever be truly objective and hold armed groups and forces accountable.

49. **Ms. Zerrougui** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict) said that the mechanism provided for engagement at many levels with Member States and other parties to a conflict. Responsibility for implementation was assigned to the highest United Nations representatives in a country, namely Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Regional Coordinators and representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund, who co-chaired the Country Task Force for Monitoring and Reporting. The mechanism, in conjunction with the process for listing and delisting and the relevant action plans, was effective in holding to account those who committed violations. It might, however, be possible to develop a mechanism with Member States and non-State actors that went even further to stop the violations. Noting the near universal ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, she said that the challenge was now to convince States that it was not in their interests to commit other violations, such as killing and maiming children, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the abduction of children, which had been triggered for listing in 2009, 2011 and 2015, respectively.

50. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) asked about the impact on the protection of civilians of the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas.

51. **Mr. Daccord** (Director-General, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that where explosive weapons with wide-area effects were used in heavily populated areas, the likelihood of indiscriminate effects was high. Those weapons caused major civilian losses and damage, including to essential services. States must be encouraged not to use such weapons in urban areas, and ICRC sought to engage in a dialogue on the conduct of military operations in those areas. The prison population and the families of missing persons should not be overlooked in a discussion on protection of civilians.

52. **Mr. Abdulkarim** (Director, Iraqi Health and Social Care Organization) said that the provision of risk education to populations in danger, including children, was a key element in reducing the number of casualties among the civilian population.

53. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that efforts were always made to gather the evidence required to hold people to account, in some cases even after the resolution of a conflict. Questions as to whether impunity or an amnesty could be offered in order to achieve peace were highly complex.

54. **Ms. Decrey-Warner** (Executive President, Geneva Call) said that it was important to recognize that all parties to a conflict, including non-State armed actors, must respect international humanitarian law. Engagement with armed groups should be the rule, not the exception. Recognition of efforts made by all parties to a conflict, including armed groups, provided an incentive to continue such efforts and might encourage action by other groups. In order to leave no one behind, the international community must work together to identify inventive solutions that offered a viable alternative to fighting, including for freed child soldiers. She suggested the holding of a forum on lessons learned and on how to engage all conflicting parties in respecting and ensuring protection for civilians.

55. **Mr. Cone** (Executive Director, Médecins sans frontières — United States) said he would like to know how the multilateral system, States and regional bodies would ensure accountability in the event of violations of international humanitarian law and how Security Council resolution 2286 (2016) would be implemented, giving due visibility to accountability. An independent and impartial mechanism was required to establish the facts and the types of sanctions required; however, any mechanisms put in place must be meaningful and could not be politicized. Victims of violations should be compensated. The United Nations should engage in an honest reflection of its experience of protecting civilians in specially created sites, including those in South Sudan, particularly regarding such aspects as safety and the provision of assistance. It was important to allow and empower teams in the field to make decisions about the risks they were prepared to take to reach populations. While the consent of parties to a conflict was important for the security of teams on the ground, arbitrary denial of assistance was not acceptable.

56. **Mr. Daccord** (Director-General, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that States played an essential role in ensuring respect for international humanitarian law. It would therefore be useful, in a future discussion, for States to be represented on the panel in order to share their experiences, know-how, best practices and challenges. It was important for the international community to find ways of working together to ensure that the existing legal framework was implemented. Security Council resolution 2286 (2016) was a key element in protecting those providing assistance and he trusted that it would be fully implemented in all countries. Lastly, when talking about protection of civilians, it was important not to forget vulnerable populations such as prisoners, missing persons, and persons with physical and mental disabilities.

57. **Ms. Zerrougui** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict) said that children were not merely the accidental victims of conflict; they were being increasingly targeted, including by troops representing or associated with Governments, as a means of seeking revenge against parents. Denial was neither a solution nor response; such Governments must find out what was happening in their countries and why, face up to reality and rectify the situation.

58. **Mr. Abdulkarim** (Director, Iraqi Health and Social Care Organization) said that a lack of information about perpetrators, victims and causes impeded interventions by international or local organizations. The international community should therefore identify a mechanism to ensure a flow of information for the benefit of civilians.

59. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), summarizing the discussion, said that there was broad agreement that non-compliance was the main problem and that a political choice lay at the heart of a State's ability to reduce the human cost of war. Key components to promote compliance included the existence of robust legal frameworks, preparedness to respond to crises, dialogue with all conflicting parties, fact-finding missions and data collection. In order to instil confidence, credible and independent investigations must be conducted and violations of international humanitarian law must be punished.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

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Summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 29 June 2016, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Lauber (Vice-President) ..... (Switzerland)

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Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*)

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16-11171 (E)

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In the absence of Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Mr. Lauber (Switzerland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 4: Elections, nominations, confirmations and appointments (*continued*) (E/2016/1/Add.1)

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (E/2016/9/Add.5)

1. **The President** recalled that pursuant to resolution 2000/22 and decisions 2001/316 and 2016/205 of the Council, eight members of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues were appointed by the President of the Council and eight were elected by the members of the Council. The Council would need to elect one member from an Asia-Pacific State by the end of 2016 to fill an outstanding vacancy.

2. He invited the Council to turn its attention to the eight members of the Permanent Forum to be appointed by the President. Following consultations and a review of the nominations received from indigenous organizations, taking into account the diversity and geographical distribution of the indigenous peoples of the world, as well as the principles of transparency, equal representation, equal opportunity and gender balance, he had decided to appoint the following experts as members of the Permanent Forum for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2017: Ms. Mariam Wallet Aboubakrine (Mali); Mr. Elifuhara Laltaika (United Republic of Tanzania); Ms. Ann Nuorgam (Finland); Mr. Phoolman Chaudhary (Nepal); Ms. Terri Henry (United States of America); Ms. Lourdes Tiban Guala (Ecuador); Mr. Dimitri Zaitcev (Russian Federation); and Mr. Les Malezer (Australia).

Agenda item 9: Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance
(*continued*) (A/71/82-E/2016/60)

3. **Mr. Anshor** (Observer for Indonesia) said that the magnitude and complexity of humanitarian emergencies required Member States and humanitarian actors at all levels to coordinate their efforts. His Government believed that an inclusive participatory process, in which all humanitarian actors and stakeholders were actively involved, was an imperative in facing humanitarian crises in a more effective manner. Humanitarian action also required the empowerment of local communities and contributions from the private sector.

4. The best forms of humanitarian assistance were prevention, preparedness and resilience. Building those capacities should be an integral part of the holistic approach to both conflict- and disaster-related crises, especially as assistance transitioned from relief to development. The focus of humanitarian action must shift from response to prevention. Long-term investments in preparedness, risk reduction and resilience should not be seen as an extra cost in development financing but rather as an essential step towards protecting development objectives and gains.

5. Indonesia was committed to implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and to improving local capacity. Community-based mitigation systems were being developed alongside a more flexible system of risk financing within the national health system. Indonesia had also implemented an action plan for 2015 to 2020 for disaster-safe schools, a priority of the national development plan. Strengthening the resilience of the poor and vulnerable was critical to ending poverty. Women were disproportionately affected by humanitarian emergencies and must therefore be given an equal opportunity to engage in all phases of humanitarian work.

6. **Mr. Mawe** (Ireland) said that his Government remained committed to building long-term solutions while ensuring that necessary funding was provided to support life-saving humanitarian operations. It supported the Organization's ongoing reforms to strengthen operating mandates and coordination mechanisms in response to the increasing humanitarian need. Pooled funds played an important and unique role in humanitarian aid, allowing local responders to provide timely and coordinated assistance, and should be central to any discussion on how best to follow through with the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016.

7. Protection must be at the centre of all humanitarian action, especially the protection of vulnerable groups such as women and children. Ireland continued to advocate for the prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence in emergencies. Development and humanitarian actors must take stock of their current efforts to address the migration crisis and

global displacement, and determine their goals for the upcoming years. The international community must work collectively to prevent, reduce and respond to protracted humanitarian suffering and must remember to keep the people affected by or susceptible to crisis at the heart of all discussions.

8. **Mr. Milanović** (Serbia) extended his deepest condolences to the families of the victims and the Government and people of Turkey following the terrible terrorist attack that had recently occurred in Istanbul.

9. Urgent measures needed to be taken to prevent and end civilian casualties and the wars that caused them. The root causes of conflict must be addressed through political solutions, and parties to a conflict must respect and comply with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles to protect civilians, especially women and girls and other vulnerable groups.

10. Over 700,000 refugees and migrants had passed through Serbia since the beginning of 2015. Although the so-called Western Balkan route was no longer active, a steady smaller stream of migrants continued to enter the country daily through the illegal activities of traffickers and smugglers. His Government was concerned that the wave of migrants might resume if lasting solutions were not found and had called for a comprehensive European solution to the migrant crisis. Serbia had been lauded by the European Union and other partners for its empathy, compassion and assistance for migrants and refugees transiting through the country. Its solidarity with the plight of migrants stemmed from its own experience with refugees from neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, and its own internally displaced populations from Kosovo and Metohija. One third of the country had been affected by the unprecedented floods in 2014, and his Government was therefore fully aware of the challenges caused by climate change.

11. Poverty, inequality and instability also caused many people to leave their homes in search of better life opportunities, which made them easy prey for smugglers and traffickers. The international community needed to enhance its cooperation in fighting transnational organized crime networks and explore innovative ways to capitalize on the benefits of migration for both countries of origin and destination.

12. **Mr. Jürgenson** (Estonia) said that Governments, regional organizations, donors, development organizations, civil society and the private sector must ensure respect for core humanitarian values. His Government had initiated resettlement programmes in order to share the responsibility with host communities and countries, and to alleviate the protection needs of the most vulnerable. Assistance must be provided through an approach that preserved the dignity and self-reliance of the displaced and the resilience of host communities. Immediate relief should be complemented by mid- and long-term support to address the wider displacement situation.

13. Children constituted approximately half of the 65 million displaced people and more than half of all refugees. Children were particularly vulnerable in emergencies and faced increased risks of violence, exploitation and abuse. Their unique protection needs must therefore be addressed in humanitarian programmes, especially through access to quality education. The most vulnerable, including children, must be at the centre of the discussion at the General Assembly high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants to be held in September.

14. Humanitarian and development actors should seek better collaboration through joint programming and funding. The divide could be bridged in the creation of one impartial, trustworthy United Nations coordinator at the country level to handle both development and humanitarian operations. His Government welcomed the "grand bargain" and urged the international community to deliver on its commitment to greater transparency, effectiveness and engagement between humanitarian and development actors.

15. The ongoing violations of international humanitarian law, instances of impunity and restrictions to humanitarian access were of grave concern and must be condemned more consistently and systematically.

16. **Ms. Oh** Youngju (Republic of Korea) said that the remarkable level of participation and commitment at the World Humanitarian Summit to develop a new vision for humanitarian action was clear evidence of the solidarity and political will to ensure lives of dignity for all.

17. Conflict prevention and resolution were crucial for finding solutions to humanitarian crises and advancing beyond humanitarian need alone. In that

regard, the Republic of Korea would increase its support for fragile and conflict-affected States and double its contribution to country-based pooled funds.

18. The Summit had provided a platform to launch a number of partnerships and initiatives to target vulnerable groups, including women and girls, persons with disabilities and youth. Under its "Better Life for Girls Initiative", the Republic of Korea was scaling up its assistance for women. By 2020, at least 20 per cent of the country's total humanitarian assistance would be allocated to education and capacity-building for women.

19. Humanitarian and development actors across the United Nations system and beyond must work together to achieve better collective outcomes from the outset. Efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should properly and effectively reflect humanitarian needs. The upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review would serve as a good platform to explore solutions.

20. The international community should remain ambitious in its vision and bold in its actions towards a world where everyone lived in safety and dignity. The Republic of Korea was strongly committed to restoring humanity and would continue to expand its humanitarian assistance and work closely with the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders to advance the Agenda for Humanity (A/70/709, annex).

21. **Mr. Menelaou** (Observer for Cyprus) said that there must be a collective commitment to reform humanitarian policies. Local communities must be more involved and empowered in order to decisively address the issue of forced displacement. Humanitarian policies should be gender responsive, and women and girls seen as powerful actors, not only as victims. Disaster- and climate-related risks must be reduced, and conflicts must be targeted before they escalated. Parties to a conflict must adhere to the principles of international humanitarian and human rights law.

22. Cyprus had committed to designing a national humanitarian policy, including a five-year strategic plan, to evaluate the country's humanitarian assistance. The plan would work towards ensuring coherence between humanitarian and development actors, allocate unearmarked funding, increase funding for hosts of refugees and reduce risks for both man-made and natural disasters.

23. Regrettably, the host country of the World Humanitarian Summit had taken a disappointing stance against Cyprus, disregarding the principles and relevant resolutions of the United Nations. His Government found that behaviour to be completely inappropriate, even more so as it had occurred during an event aimed at upholding international law. The follow-up to the Summit should focus on collective deliberations at the United Nations level, without allowing any political distractions to downplay what was at stake.

24. **Mr. Mendoza-García** (Observer for Costa Rica) said that the international community must take clear action, mobilize political will and use all available resources to restore faith in humanity. The primary obligation to guarantee basic needs for survival, such as food, water and sanitation and medical services, rested with the State. The upcoming high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants should focus primarily on prevention and finding peaceful solutions to conflicts. State and non-State parties to armed conflict must comply with international humanitarian law. The right to education, freedom of worship and to health services must be respected and protected, and the safety of medical personnel and humanitarian actors must be guaranteed.

25. Women and girls, who were disproportionately affected and vulnerable in crisis situations, should also be a priority. It was imperative to combat gender-based violence and sexual violence in general, and to include women and girls in the decision-making process. Their leadership and empowerment played a principal role in preventing and managing conflicts. The increased number of deaths and injuries caused by explosives was unacceptable. Parties to conflict had an obligation to abstain from the use of explosives, and his delegation was disappointed that there had been no specific mention of that issue in the resolution to be adopted at the current session.

26. States must take all necessary measures to guarantee the safety of their people, including extensive investigations into violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. States must also guarantee effective methods for accountability and thus eliminate impunity. The international community should support the Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

27. **Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) said that his Government was committed to providing humanitarian assistance to refugees wherever necessary. Currently, the "White Helmets" initiative was undertaking humanitarian missions with Syrian refugees in Lebanon. His Government was proud to be one of the countries that granted humanitarian visas and offered resettlement opportunities to Syrian refugees, with plans to significantly increase those numbers. Argentina was guided by the principle of non-indifference in the provision of humanitarian assistance, especially for those States with large communities of displaced populations.

28. Those suffering from the effects of natural disasters should receive equal attention. His Government was fully committed to implementing the Sendai Framework, which would increase resilience, reduce vulnerabilities and build the capacity of communities, enabling them to be actors of preparedness, recovery and rehabilitation and thereby reduce dependence on international assistance.

29. His Government was committed to supporting more inclusive and effective humanitarian action coordinated by States, which should focus on vulnerability in order to prevent conflicts. Local communities must play an active and dynamic role in decision-making and in providing humanitarian assistance.

30. **Ms. Luo** (China) said that humanitarian work must strictly abide by the Charter of the United Nations; respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the recipient country; and comply with international law and the national laws of host countries. The international community should always prioritize peaceful means to settle disputes, through dialogue, negotiation and good offices. Humanitarian issues should not be politicized, and humanitarian assistance should be non-military in nature. Efforts should be made to maintain the peace and stability of the host country and ensure sustainable protection for civilians in conflict zones.

31. A number of the current humanitarian crises caused by armed conflicts were rooted in acute political, economic, social and environmental problems resulting from protracted poverty and underdevelopment. The international community must work together to address those root causes by increasing its efforts to honour commitments to economic growth and sustainable development in developing countries while responding to short-term humanitarian needs. However, an increase in humanitarian resources must not come at the expense of development resources. Developed countries should honour their official development assistance (ODA) commitments on time and in full, especially through the provision of additional support to least developed countries in terms of capital, technical know-how and capacity-building so that affected countries could transition from short-term emergency relief to long-term sustainable development.

32. Her Government believed that the ultimate goal of building partnerships was to pool resources and foster a common understanding to enhance the development capacity of developing countries. The recipient country must play the leading role, and assistance should strengthen the relief and coordinating capacity of the recipient Government. There must be mechanisms in place for smooth and effective participation and coordination so that all partners could leverage their own comparative advantages and make full use of available resources. Through its existing mechanisms and resources, the United Nations should serve as a coordinator in partnership-building. Her Government hoped that the United Nations humanitarian system would further improve its mechanisms; increase the participation of Member States, especially developing countries; facilitate the exchange of experiences; and further improve its management and efficiency in order to play a bigger role in international humanitarian affairs.

33. As a developing country prone to natural disasters, China was working hard to improve its own capacity for response while also taking an active role in multilateral and bilateral humanitarian assistance and contributing to international humanitarian responses.

34. **Mr. Konig** (Germany) said that the international community must now implement the ambitious commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit. He invited those States that had not attended to collaborate with his Government to ensure that the assistance provided to affected people respected their priority needs.

35. Governments, humanitarian organizations and local and national actors must implement different approaches to affect change on the ground. Germany supported concrete measures for greater efficiency through the "grand bargain", including an increase in

cash-based programming, a reduction in earmarking to allow for more flexible implementation of funds and the harmonization of reporting requirements to place greater focus on humanitarian work.

36. Efforts to increase efficiency must be complemented by political solutions, more global funding and better collaboration among humanitarian actors, donors and affected States with a view to closing the financial gap for humanitarian assistance.

37. The humanitarian affairs segment of the Council must maintain a clear humanitarian focus to further improve the humanitarian system and better help vulnerable people affected by disasters, conflict and dire circumstances.

38. **Mr. Mohamed** (Observer for Sudan) expressed his condolences to the Government and people of Turkey and following the attack in Istanbul.

39. Unprecedented numbers of people had been displaced by conflict and natural disasters caused by the El Niño phenomenon, which had affected a number of countries in South America and Africa, including Sudan. The international community must work together to respond to humanitarian need in those emergencies, especially in developing countries. There must be more respect and support for efforts to consolidate and strengthen national capacities and improve humanitarian response to natural disasters. Emergency situations required more financing from Member States so as to make better use of all available financial instruments. Risk reduction should be integrated in all phases of disaster management and in development plans, especially in those countries most affected by natural disasters.

40. Financial and technical support from Member States and the United Nations was paramount to strengthening national and local capacities for a faster, more effective response to emergencies. Increased humanitarian assistance would improve the capacities of government institutions and civil society organizations in affected countries but should not be seen as a means of substituting for national institutions. The international community must respect the principles of cooperation, solidarity and cohesion, and contribute to meeting urgent humanitarian needs while respecting the sovereignty of States.

41. **Mr. Sobral Duarte** (Brazil) said that humanitarian action should contribute to resilience, focusing on the most vulnerable, including women and persons with disabilities. Local capabilities should be at the centre of humanitarian action whenever possible. His Government favoured investment in cash-based programming that supported local markets, the promotion of local procurement of goods and services, and the development of social safety nets and insurance mechanisms for vulnerable populations. Given the diverse nature of current humanitarian crises, increased coordination between humanitarian and development actors should be guided by a customized and context-specific approach that increased coherence while maintaining the essential features and different responsibilities of both activities. Further discussion was required to determine concrete ways to better bridge silos and work towards collective outcomes. His delegation was open to discussing the proposals made during the current humanitarian affairs segment.

42. There must be earlier and more unified action to prevent and de-escalate armed conflicts, the main driver of humanitarian crises. Unity was needed not just in action but also in refraining from causing more harm to people and aggravating situations. The unprecedented number of crises could not be seen as unrelated to the unilateral recourse to force. The international community should be committed to breaking the cycle of conflict. When prevention failed, there was an even greater need to comply with international human rights and humanitarian law, especially regarding the protection of medical and humanitarian personnel and related facilities.

43. The international community must address the humanitarian challenges brought about by new technologies, such as autonomous weapons systems and drones, and the lack of compliance with international humanitarian law on the part of private military and security companies. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons was also integral to debates on nuclear disarmament, as those weapons were incompatible with the core principles of international humanitarian law. The upcoming high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants should promote flexible and innovative alternatives for the admission of refugees, such as humanitarian visas, private sponsorship programmes, family reunification and labour mobility mechanisms.

44. **Mr. Blanchard** (Observer for Canada) said that, at the World Humanitarian Summit, his Government

had pledged an additional $600 million in funding to respond to urgent needs, strengthen emergency response and build resilience. It had committed to enhancing the protection of civilians and empowering women and girls. The Government was also increasing multi-year planning and programming for protracted crises, working with development actors, supporting local responders and investing in innovative programming to address the underlying causes of vulnerability. He expressed concern about the growing numbers of forcibly displaced persons and the discrimination and marginalization that characterized the experience of many refugees and migrants. Canada would continue to shoulder its responsibilities and open its own doors to welcome those most vulnerable.

45. His Government was committed to revitalizing its engagement and leadership, and would continue to share its experiences with a view to improving and intensifying global action for refugees and migrants. It was currently conducting a broad public review of its international assistance policies and programmes in order to better respond to the challenges and opportunities of the new global context. Canada had recently joined the political declaration on suspension of veto powers in cases of mass atrocity; it had endorsed the Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war; and it was also increasing its support for United Nations peacekeeping operations.

46. **Ms. Cantada** (Observer for the Philippines) expressed her Government's deepest condolences and sympathy to Turkey and its people for the tragic loss of life and the injuries sustained at the Istanbul Ataturk airport.

47. In an effort to further strengthen the coordination of relief efforts at the global level, the Philippines and the United States had recently launched the Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster, for the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative. The Philippines also supported the platform for disaster-related displacement which sought to improve its national prevention, preparedness and response. Her country was extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and climate-related risks. In 2015, it had suffered numerous typhoons and had been severely affected by the El Niño phenomenon.

48. Greater investment in preparedness was required to address those crises, and Governments and local actors must to be at the centre of action. For her Government, preparedness was a no-regret, cost-effective investment. By pre-investing in response and recovery capacities, many crises could be mitigated or prevented. Despite escalating losses and stretched resources within the humanitarian community, little had been done to strengthen countries' capacities to manage shocks and crises, and reactive post-disaster response had been the norm. Less than 0.5 per cent of ODA, $13.5 billion, had been spent on disaster risk reduction and preparedness between 1991 and 2010, compared with the $176.8 billion that had been spent on international humanitarian financing.

49. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Observer for Azerbaijan) said that his Government supported the Secretary-General's call to increase the Central Emergency Response Fund to $1 billion by 2018 and had established an international development agency to assist developing countries with poverty reduction, the development of health sectors, wider application of communication technologies, efficient use of energy resources and the implementation of other humanitarian and development programmes. More than 40 countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America had benefited from the country's humanitarian, financial and technical assistance. Azerbaijan had also contributed financially to the United Nations campaign to combat Ebola.

50. The widespread civilian suffering that occurred in armed conflict called for increased respect for international humanitarian and human rights law by all parties to conflict. His Government was especially concerned by the alarming numbers of internally displaced persons worldwide, since Azerbaijan had itself experienced massive internal displacement owing to the occupation of its lands by Armenia. Despite the fact that internally displaced persons represented the majority of those displaced, regrettably, the problem still received too little attention in the global arena. His Government was therefore encouraged by the ambitious goal expressed in the Agenda for Humanity to reduce internal displacement by at least 50 per cent by 2030.

51. Azerbaijan had made tremendous progress in addressing the needs of the internally displaced. In his report (A/HRC/29/34/Add.1, para. 70), the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons had commended the Azerbaijani Government for its dedication and for continuing to assume the

primary responsibility for the protection and assistance of persons internally displaced by the armed conflict.

52. His Government welcomed the recent steps taken to reduce humanitarian challenges, in particular the adoption of global frameworks for sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction. Despite those advances, humanitarian challenges and civilian suffering would not be eliminated if the international community failed to achieve lasting political solutions to armed conflict. It must therefore increase investment in prevention and political solutions.

53. **Mr. Avdeev** (Russian Federation) said that improvements to the current international humanitarian response system must adhere strictly to the basic principles of General Assembly resolution 46/182 on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations. Humanitarian assistance must not be politicized, and the suffering of people should not be used as a means of exerting political pressure on sovereign States. That practice would discredit humanitarian assistance and undermine the faith in its independence, neutrality and impartiality.

54. Although the World Humanitarian Summit gave rise to a number of interesting and potentially useful ideas, they should not be automatically endorsed by the United Nations. There must be a thorough study of the proposals and pledges made, and the possible impact of incorporating them into General Assembly resolutions. No initiative should circumvent or replace the intergovernmental process and essential principles must be based on consensus. Attempts to formulate initiatives in a small group and then throw them into the international arena were counterproductive.

55. His Government was looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the Summit; however, that the report would be recommendatory in nature and its drafting should be based on realistic approaches, not on such inherently controversial and unrealizable initiatives as a global compact on responsibility-sharing for refugees, the limitation of veto powers for the permanent members of the Security Council, the expansion of humanitarian presence by bypassing sovereign States or undeveloped ideas for in-depth reform of the current mechanisms of the United Nations humanitarian agencies. The Organization should instead focus on real work based on current mandates to scale up the humanitarian response system.

56. Concrete proposals mentioned by the Russian Federation at the World Humanitarian Summit included, inter alia: creating the conditions for the political and diplomatic settlement of conflicts and eradicating their root causes; strengthening the leading role of the United Nations in coordinating international efforts to counter emergency situations; disseminating best practices and technology; improving instruments to monitor and forecast emergencies; developing a global network of crisis management centres to serve as the basis for better humanitarian emergency response; and improving the regulatory and legal basis for the more effective provision and receipt of international assistance, which should be better integrated into national efforts.

57. The Russian Federation had provided over $200 million of assistance to 24 countries in all parts of the world in 2014-2015. It would continue to actively cooperate with the United Nations and Member States in its response to humanitarian crises.

58. **Ms. Simonyan** (Observer for Armenia) said that the global displacement crisis required a collective response and better cooperation on border management, migration and combating trafficking. Over 20,000 displaced persons had sought protection in Armenia, making it the third-largest recipient of Syrian refugees per capita in Europe. Armenia already hosted hundreds of thousands of refugees as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and over 1,000 displaced persons from Iraq. Her Government continued to facilitate integration and implement settlement programmes for displaced persons with the invaluable assistance of international institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations. Civil society made important contributions to the humanitarian and development response. Her Government also believed in the efficiency of regional mechanisms, as regional organizations had a better understanding of local circumstances and could provide tailored, effective tools, as well as resources and financing.

59. The United Nations system must improve its normative and operational capacity to strengthen prevention and resilience. The field missions remained an important resource in identifying deteriorating situations on the ground and signalling the Organization

to act. The human rights component of conflict prevention should be a prominent feature across the United Nations system. Conflict situations could be detected at an early stage because they were most often a reaction to persistent injustice, discrimination and denial of rights, as Armenia knew all too well.

60. She was disturbed to observe that one delegation continued the detrimental practice of voicing one-sided accusations. Unfortunately, that country continued to manipulate the issue of internally displaced persons and refugees after 25 years, deliberately inflating its numbers and failing to implement effective integration and assistance. She encouraged delegations to respect the work of the Council and to remain focused on the issues at hand and not politicize the discussions.

61. **Mr. AlJarallah** (Observer for Kuwait) said that the international community was facing challenges to peace and security that required a common response and a shared responsibility. They could not be handled by individual States or groups of States alone. However, the international community had been unable to establish a common, effective position to end crises and protect victims. The root causes must be targeted in order to achieve political solutions that would put an end to those bloodbaths. The parties to conflict must assume their responsibility to protect civilians, allow access for humanitarian aid and respect the Charter of the United Nations, international law, human rights and international humanitarian law. Impunity must not be tolerated. The international community had a responsibility to protect people from terrorism and respond to their hopes and aspirations, especially those suffering in Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

62. His Government had spared no effort to provide humanitarian aid to people in affected States. In the last five years, Kuwait had provided more than $2 billion in humanitarian assistance. Development aid had constituted 2.1 per cent of the gross domestic product, twice as much as international pledges. Kuwait renewed its commitment to make voluntary financial contributions to the programmes, agencies and funds of the United Nations and had pledged $150 million over 15 years to finance development in different parts of the world.

63. **Mr. de Rojas** (Observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta) expressed his sincere condolences to Turkey for the terrible crime perpetrated at the Ataturk Airport in Istanbul.

64. The Order of Malta had been committed to humanitarian action for over 900 years, serving the poor and the sick without regard to religion, ethnicity or nationality. The Charter for Faith-Based Humanitarian Action, the result of a special session on religious engagement at the World Humanitarian Summit, demonstrated the importance of faith-based organizations in the humanitarian arena. Those organizations were often able to provide fast, effective assistance through their connection with local faith communities. They were also often prepared to stay in the field for longer periods of time, which enabled them to build trust and play a vital role in reconciliation processes.

65. The Order of Malta supported the call to strengthen synergies between all humanitarian actors and would host a follow-up meeting in 2017 between religious actors and other stakeholders with a view to mobilizing States, civil society and global leaders to increase respect for humanitarian law and principles, as well as the rights of refugees and migrants. The Order of Malta assisted refugees and migrants in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and those crossing the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas by maintaining a presence on rescue boats and providing health care and other assistance in destination countries.

66. **Mr. Youssef** (Observer for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)) expressed his condolences, on behalf of the organization, to the people of Turkey for the terrorist attack in Istanbul. That incident would only strengthen the resolve to fight terrorism.

67. Emergency humanitarian assistance, meant to be temporary, had become more permanent as conflicts became more protracted and more recurrent. Three of the current four level 3 emergencies were in OIC member States, and seven of the ten largest refugee populations were hosted by its member States. Resources and capacities were being stretched to the limit, and the influx of refugees continued. The international community had a collective responsibility to support those suffering from crises and their host communities until political solutions could be reached.

68. In fulfilling the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit, OIC would work with its member States to facilitate the integration of refugees and internally displaced persons into national development plans. It would also assist in the development of national legislation, policies and

strategies to protect internally displaced persons and refugees in cooperation with United Nations agencies and other partners. The international community should promote innovative resource mobilization by supporting regional steering groups and networks for regional humanitarian organizations, as those networks often had local connections and knowledge that might not be readily available to international partners. Local NGOs were the main OIC partners on the ground and had a clear understanding of the needs of local communities.

69. The international community had a collective responsibility to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and to strive to gain rapid and unimpeded access to those in need. He hoped that the report of the Secretary-General regarding the outcomes of World Humanitarian Summit would outline the actions to be taken in order to implement reforms and address the growing financial gaps in humanitarian need.

70. **Mr. Spoerri** (Observer for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) said that millions of people continued to suffer from violations of international humanitarian law, which remained a major cause of displacement. The situation in the Lake Chad Basin was especially alarming and, like the Middle East, was a major regional emergency. States had begun to work on an intergovernmental process to find ways to enhance the implementation of international humanitarian law, following the thirty-second Conference of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

71. Internally displaced persons must be protected and have access to quality services. Short- and long-term needs must be met through an approach that combined relief and development. The basic needs of host communities and the internally displaced must receive equal attention. ICRC could play a role in reaching internally displaced persons who were cut off from basic services by lines of conflict. In Africa the internally displaced could benefit greatly from the broader ratification and implementation of the Kampala Convention, a pioneering treaty that represented an excellent way of working with such persons. The African Union and ICRC were continuing to work closely to find new ways to implement the Convention.

72. Armed conflict was increasing in cities, towns and informal settlement. The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) provided States with a major opportunity to define clear policies of protection and assistance in the context of armed conflict in urban areas; however, its zero draft had virtually no policy recommendations. The New Urban Agenda must incorporate policies aimed at respecting international humanitarian law in urban warfare and maintaining essential infrastructure and services during armed conflict. ICRC would gladly advise States on those policies.

73. **Ms. Christensen** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that a number of important initiatives had been launched at the World Humanitarian Summit to improve humanitarian response, including new charters on the role of youth, the needs of the disabled and humanitarian emergencies in urban settings. The complex nature of the challenges facing the international community required a new approach that would make better use of the many different actors within the humanitarian system.

74. Progress should no longer be measured in terms of people assisted, as action must be taken to prevent suffering through risk reduction and preparedness. The International Federation was pressing forward with the One Billion Coalition for Resilience, to provide support to one billion people by 2025 through strengthening community resilience. The international community must take action to build local humanitarian capacity. Local actors had close ties to their communities and could act quickly, at reduced cost and in the most culturally appropriate ways. And yet, less than 1 per cent of international humanitarian aid was directly channelled to local actors, and humanitarian coordination mechanisms were still not placing them at the centre of operations. The goal of the "grand bargain" was to channel 25 per cent of international humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible by 2020. In some instances, prior investments would be required to improve the operational and functional capacity of local humanitarian actors and ensure their readiness to most effectively use increased emergency funding.

75. **Ms. Marcaillou** (Director, United Nations Mine Action Service) said that international humanitarian law was being flagrantly violated in ongoing conflicts. Civilian buildings and populations were increasingly being deliberately targeted, and the explosive hazards used in those attacks killed and injured civilians,

impeded their protection, blocked humanitarian assistance and inhibited stabilization and peacebuilding.

76. The commitments made to implement the Agenda for Humanity should take into account the horrendous humanitarian impact of explosive hazards and integrate humanitarian mine action into strategies, planning, programming and financing. Interventions by the Service allowed internally displaced persons and refugees to return home safely and humanitarian workers to deliver aid. National partners and survivors would be empowered through technical training, mentoring and greater access to humanitarian funding.

77. In retaken areas in Iraq, the Service was coordinating an emergency mine action response with the Iraqi authorities and the international community. Humanitarian mine action was a prerequisite to the implementation of stabilization and humanitarian plans. In Syria, she had met with humanitarian workers, explaining that besieged areas were the most contaminated and therefore posed the greatest risk to their convoys and the communities they served.

78. **Mr. Brennan** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that, for the 130 million people who required humanitarian assistance worldwide, minor injuries and illness could be life-threatening. As conflicts and natural disasters destroyed hospitals, basic health services became tremendously difficult to access. Diseases spread as people were forced to take refuge in overcrowded shelters with poor water and sanitation and inadequate access to food. More than 50 per cent of preventable deaths among children and over 60 per cent among women occurred in settings of conflict and fragility.

79. WHO was currently undertaking the deepest reform in its 68-year history to ensure the delivery of faster, more predictable and more comprehensive health services in emergencies, which required collaboration with other sectors, such as water and sanitation, nutrition, shelter, protection and logistics. The international community must protect heroic health-care workers in times of conflict and crisis. WHO would continue to document and strongly condemn barbaric attacks on health-care workers.

80. **Ms. Haque** (Deputy Director for the Office of Emergency Programmes, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) said that approximately 250 million children lived in countries affected by conflict. Armed conflict impeded access to services that were essential for their well-being. Schools, water facilities and hospitals had been damaged or attacked, impacting the entire care system for years. The increasing use of explosive weapons in cities and other populated areas was partly responsible. In 2015, it was estimated that more than 90 per cent of the victims of those attacks had been civilians, including many children, who were sometimes left with new life-long disabilities. Entire communities remained trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas and were denied services, sometimes to the point of starvation. All parties to conflict must fully comply with their obligations under international law to guarantee the delivery of services.

81. Programmes must be maintained to ensure the safety and well-being of children, to protect them from gender-based violence, to reunite unaccompanied and separated children with their families and caregivers, and to provide emergency mine risk education. Education should be sustained, even in the midst of crisis, and yet, it received less than 2 per cent of humanitarian funding. The Education Cannot Wait fund launched at the World Humanitarian Summit aimed to provide children in crises with the education they so desperately needed. It was also essential to seek input from those in need of services. They could participate through local dialogue with youth groups, NGOs and local governments; however, the international community must find ways to connect with those groups more systematically. Text messaging and social media offered effective ways for bilateral communication.

82. UNICEF was committed to moving forward with the pledges made at the World Humanitarian Summit and assisting its partners to build a more global, accountable and robust operational system that placed children's rights and needs at the heart of humanitarian and development action.

83. **Ms. Mucavi** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that the commitments made by FAO at the World Humanitarian Summit were reflected in its programme of work and directly related to its strategic priorities of ending hunger and malnutrition, promoting stability, reducing world poverty, improving food systems and building resilience.

84. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would require coordinated and complementary action from various actors that would address both humanitarian and development needs simultaneously.

In Syria, many farmers, mostly women, were struggling to keep their lands productive. They were the backbone of Syria's food supply and would be key to the country's future recovery. In Somalia, cash-for-work programmes had helped overcome famine, protect livelihoods and rehabilitate rural infrastructure. Food security and nutrition were essential to building peaceful societies, addressing the root causes of distress migration and ensuring long-term sustainable development. For example, assistance provided to the Filipino rice farmers in the immediate aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan had allowed them to salvage the planting season, thereby increasing local food security and reducing the need for humanitarian assistance.

85. FAO was committed to strengthening its partnerships at the local, national and international levels in order to invest in preparedness, build resilience, respond to emergencies, protect life and dignity and foster long-term development.

86. **Ms. Matthews** (Interim Deputy Director, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the increase in forced displacement clearly demonstrated the political deficits in preventing and resolving conflict and instability. More than 1 million refugees and migrants had arrived in Europe, many from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. New crises had erupted in Burundi and Yemen, South Sudan had a total of 2.25 million refugees and internally displaced persons, violence and instability had kept many people from eastern Nigeria and the Central African Republic in exile and the situation remained precarious for large numbers of internally displaced persons in Ukraine. It was no surprise then that the international humanitarian system was under enormous strain. Humanitarian assistance could never be an effective substitute for action to address the root causes of forced displacement. The international community must work together to mobilize the necessary political will to facilitate durable solutions.

87. UNHCR continued to work in close collaboration with other humanitarian and development organizations and stressed the need for continued engagement with host communities affected by displacement. It was encouraged by the recent report of the Secretary-General (A/70/59), entitled "In safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants", and his call to adopt global compacts both for safe, regular and orderly migration and on responsibility-sharing for refugees.

88. **Mr. Pinheiro** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that relief turned into development when refugees and other forcibly displaced persons were given access to labour markets and decent job opportunities, thereby optimizing the positive economic impacts of large movements of migrants and refugees. No peacebuilding, post-conflict or disaster recovery strategies would be sustainable without a strong employment component to reintegrate former soldiers into the workforce and generate income.

89. His organization had significant experience of linking humanitarian responses and development through job creation and the promotion of labour standards: revisions were underway to bring the ILO Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation of 1944 into line with the current context and to better respond to conflict and disaster situations; similarly, the 1949 Migration for Employment Convention promoted and protected the right to employment opportunities for migrant workers and refugees. ILO constituents had requested a set of guiding principles on labour market access for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons that would address governance frameworks; economic and employment policies for inclusive labour markets; labour rights, equal opportunities and equal treatment; and partnerships, coordination and coherence. ILO was committed to raising awareness about the importance of including labour market implications and decent work policies as core components of the global compacts for migration and for refugees.

90. **Mr. De Guimaraes-Pinto** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that culture had moved to the front lines of new wars. Through systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, people were being persecuted on cultural and religious grounds. Cultural landmarks were being intentionally destroyed in cities like Palmyra, Mosul, Basra and Aleppo. Archaeological sites were being looted on an industrial scale, fuelling the illicit trafficking of cultural objects and financing terrorism. Coordinated attacks were carried out on schools and universities, symbols of creativity and free thinking. Responding to those challenges called for new strategies in peacebuilding and addressing emergencies.

91. The deliberate destruction of cultural heritage was a war crime used as a tactic to disseminate fear and hatred. UNESCO considered the protection of cultural

heritage a humanitarian imperative and a security issue. In the long term, it was also a development and recovery issue. It was clear that heritage could mobilize and unite communities, as seen in 2015 with the restitution of the 14 mausoleums around Timbuktu that had been destroyed by armed groups. In 2016, UNESCO and ICRC had signed an agreement that integrated culture into humanitarian operations.

92. Education must also be integrated into humanitarian operations from their inception. The Education Cannot Wait fund, launched at the World Humanitarian Summit, was a global breakthrough in overcoming gross underfunding for education in emergencies and the need for exceptional and innovative measures to meet educational needs. The Safe Schools Declaration and its guidelines represented a major advance in protecting schools, universities, teachers and children.

93. Freedom of expression and information were crucial to peacebuilding, and free and independent media were essential watchdogs for human rights violations. UNESCO was leading the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity to create a safe environment for journalists in conflict and non-conflict situations.

94. **Mr. Muchka** (Czech Republic) said that, in view of his country's limited capacities and growing humanitarian needs, his Government focused on efficient local humanitarian response according to the principles of good humanitarian donorship and always cooperated with affected populations in an effort to reach all persons in need. It promoted humanitarian cooperation within the European Union, which provided its members with a unique opportunity to coordinate and share capacities, assessments, field responses and lessons learned. His Government was ready to follow through with the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit to assist countries and regions in developing disaster risk reduction programmes focused on climate- and conflict-related risks through the coherent implementation of the Sendai Framework and the 2030 Agenda.

95. **Ms. Amiri-Talesh** (Peru) expressed her Government's solidarity with the Government of Turkey in connection with the recent attacks.

96. Effective humanitarian solutions, political action and respect for the human rights of displaced persons were essential to ensure that those in vulnerable situations, especially women, children and the elderly, achieved equal and sustainable development in the long term. Humanitarian assistance must be complemented by a long-term development plan in which local actors could play a role and should also encompass risk reduction, prevention and sustainable development.

97. In 2015, more than 19 million people had been displaced by natural disasters, exacerbated by the El Niño phenomenon. In Peru, droughts, floods and cold fronts had adversely impacted rural communities. The Government's response had been immediate, but the intensity of the phenomenon rendered it insufficient.

98. **Mr. Arrocha Olabuenaga** (Observer for Mexico) expressed his Government's condolences and condemned the attack that had occurred in Istanbul.

99. Conflict prevention should always be prioritized in the humanitarian arena. The United Nations country offices played a fundamental role in establishing partnerships with strategic actors. To prevent the escalation of violence, systematic inequalities must be addressed and local communities must be engaged in decision-making and peace negotiations. The strategic plans of United Nations agencies must define actions and policies that would guarantee a fast and effective response to emergencies.

100. The international community should prioritize the empowerment of women and girls and encourage youth participation in vulnerable countries. Improvements in public services would promote stability and prevent the escalation of conflicts. Strengthened capacities to monitor and evaluate volatile situations would help to detect early warning signs of conflict.

101. Mexico had increased its contributions to humanitarian assistance from $50 million in 2008 to $500 million in 2015. Humanitarian assistance must do more than provide aid and donations; it must build capacities so that communities could achieve peace, stability and sustainable development. In that regard, better integration was required between humanitarian and development programmes.

Draft resolution E/2016/L.20: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

102. **The President** said that the current draft resolution included a number of new paragraphs and

stronger language on important issues. The draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

103. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

104. **Mr. O'Brien** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) concluded by saying that the United Nations was committed to working with Member States and humanitarian actors to live up to the promise of the five core responsibilities of the Agenda for Humanity and to do its part to deliver the change that was needed.

Closing of the segment

105. After an exchange of courtesies, **the President** closed the humanitarian affairs segment of the 2016 session of the Council.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.